

**FORUM TO ASSESS DEVELOPMENT POLICIES OF
TANZANIA**

**REFORMING ENVIRONMENTAL
GOVERNANCE IN TANZANIA: NATURAL
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND THE
RURAL ECONOMY**

Non - Commissioned Paper

**Sub-theme 1: Good Governance and the Rule of Law: Utopia or
Reality?**

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***Paper presented at the Inaugural Tanzanian Biennial Development Forum
24th - 25th April 2003 at the Golden Tulip Hotel, Dar es Salaam Tanzania***

ABSTRACT

Over 75% of the Tanzania's population resides in rural areas where people rely upon agriculture and other natural resource uses. Consequently, the link between rural livelihoods and natural resource management is of fundamental importance to national prospects for economic growth and poverty reduction. Natural resource management, in turn, is principally a function of environmental governance. Environmental governance is largely determined by the institutions that control what happens to a given resource through the allocation and enforcement of rights of use, access, tenure and transfer. Tanzania's natural resource management legacy is dominated by the colonial heritage of centralized control. However, during the past decade numerous reforms have occurred that call for, and in some cases carry out, the democratization of resource tenure and devolution of authority. While these policy reforms are promising for environmental governance and natural resource management improvements, the reality on the ground frequently does not reflect these rhetorical changes. In practice, land and natural resource management remains centralized and local economic opportunities are foreclosed or restricted. This paper explores both these policy issues as well the practical dynamics of these issues, drawing examples from northern Tanzanian rangelands. Ultimately, we conclude that democratized natural resource management in Tanzania, although increasingly widely advocated, is yet to become a reality. This situation holds critical implications for Tanzania's economic and environmental future.

INTRODUCTION

Development efforts in Tanzania must be considered within the context of several fundamental realities. First, over 75% of the country's population lives in rural areas (World Bank, 2002). Thus effective poverty reduction and development efforts must target the rural population and the rural economy in order to have significant impact. Second, in these rural areas people overwhelmingly depend on agriculture and other natural resource uses for their livelihoods and survival. For example, over 90% of Tanzanians rely on fuel wood from trees and other vegetation for their domestic energy supplies (URT, 1998). Rural economies are therefore largely a product of the use and management of land and natural resources. Tanzania is fortunate in that it possesses a wealth and abundance of natural resources to employ in the battle against poverty. Finally, the ways in which these resources are used is fundamentally a governance issue determined by the functioning of the key management institutions of laws and policies.

This paper explores environmental governance, particularly the crucial linkage between rural development, natural resource use, and institutional reforms. We address the current state of affairs with respect to both the rural people who use these resources, and the state of the resources themselves. These trends are linked to governance dynamics and reform efforts, and the degree to which reforms actually impact on management practices. Three key questions are addressed:

- Are new opportunities for rural communities being created by current natural resource management reforms in order to improve the livelihoods of these people?
- Are natural resource management institutions operating effectively and sustainably so that they will ensure the security of rural livelihoods and provide for new economic opportunities based on Tanzania's extraordinary biological wealth?
- Is environmental governance improving in a way that can meet both the conservation and development challenges that could lead to greater national prosperity?

The answers to these questions are critical to Tanzania's ability to successfully confront contemporary economic and environmental challenges.

THE NATURAL ECONOMY OF TANZANIA

The historical dependence of Tanzanian livelihoods on natural resources covers the basic requirements for human life: food, shelter, and energy. People throughout the country's rural areas continue to rely on wild plants, animals, insects, and fish for food; trees and shrubs for fuel and building materials; wild plants for traditional medicines; and soil and water for producing crops (Mariki et al., 2003). Biodiversity is thus not some scientific abstraction to rural Tanzanians but the foundation of human sustenance and prosperity. As the basic element of natural resource use, control and ownership of land remains the most prominent socioeconomic and political issue in rural areas throughout the nation (e.g. URT, 1994). The rights of local people to use, control, and manage the other resources on that land such as water, forests and wildlife are equally central to the functioning of rural economies.

Traditional natural resource management practices and uses in Tanzania have recently become enhanced by the post-liberalization development of new economic growth sectors based on natural resource uses. For example, the two sectors responsible for most of recent growth in Tanzania's export earnings and foreign investment, and thus keys to the sustained GDP growth of the last decade, are mining and tourism. Both are reliant on natural resources- mining very directly so, and tourism more indirectly in terms of wildlife, forests, pristine coastlines and coral reefs, etc.- and both occur mainly in rural areas. Thus the importance to Tanzania's economy of natural resources has increased in recent years, and this trend is likely to continue, given the competitive advantage that the nation's biological wealth confers.

THE LEGACY OF CENTRALIZATION

The wealth of natural resources found in mainland Tanzania and surrounding areas such as ivory, arable land, and timber- was a fundamental reason for the establishment of European colonial states, and thus of all that has followed as history has unfolded. While this background is undoubtedly familiar ground, one cannot understand natural resource management dynamics and rural economies in Tanzania today without the colonial context of resource appropriation. Land and natural resource laws and policies established by colonial rulers had as their fundamental aim placing the control of these valuable resources in the hands of government institutions and so alienated access and ownership rights from indigenous people. In governance terms, the colonial period represented the formation and imposition of centralized management institutions for nearly all of the key resources found in Tanzania. Wildlife, land, and forest laws all were based on the process of alienation; large tracts were removed to central control, local people began to be moved out of new protected areas, and the use of particular species was proscribed (Wily and Mbaya, 2001; Shivji, 1998; WSRTF, 1995). The result was the increasing loss of native lands to government and impoverishment of indigenous communities as the resources they depended on were removed from their control.

The framework of central control over resources established during the colonial period is the most important characteristic of natural resource management and governance in Tanzania today. The socialist era centered on the decade of the 1970's entrenched and reinforced those centralized natural resource management practices. The nation's primary wildlife legislation¹, for example was propagated during the *ujamaa* period and placed authority and responsibility for wildlife resources in the hands of the State, with few provisions for community participation (WSRTF, 1995; Majamba, 2001).

¹The Wildlife Conservation Act No. 12 of 1974

DEMOCRATIZING NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT?

The 1990's saw a wave of policy or governance reforms in natural resource sectors addressing the problems created by the colonial legacy of exclusive centralization. The themes of the new policies are all similar: local communities and individuals do not have adequate or secure rights to land and resources; exclusive central management has not led to efficient uses; broader social participation in management rights must increase to reflect use practices. Tenure is the critical institutional element governance natural resource use. Consequently, reforming tenure to increase the degree of local authority and responsibility is a central component of these environmental policy reforms, as the National Land Policy, National Forest Policy, Wildlife Policy of Tanzania, and draft Rural Development Strategy all explicitly recognize (URT, 2001; MNRTa, 1998; MNRTb, 1998; MLHSD, 1997). For example, the National Forest Policy states:

The ownership of land and natural resources, access and the right to use them are of fundamental importance, not only for more balanced and equitable development, but also to the level of care accorded to the environment. It is only when people can satisfy their needs, have control of the resource base as well as have secure land tenure that long-term objectives of environment protection can be satisfied (MNRT, 1998a).

The Wildlife Policy of Tanzania advocates major changes to the centralized management of wildlife that has been the norm since the colonial era, stating its aim “to allow rural communities and private land holders to manage wildlife on their land for their own benefit” (MNRT, 1998b).

These governance reforms are essential to enabling new economic opportunities for the majority of Tanzania's people and effectively combating rural poverty. Livelihood diversification, for example, is a key coping strategy for rural communities, particularly in climatically unpredictable semi-arid areas such as northern Tanzania's rangelands, in that it reduces vulnerability and promotes economic resilience (Shackleton et al., 2000). The draft Rural Development Strategy prepared by the Prime Minister's Office highlights the “need to emphasize economic diversification in the rural areas...diversification of opportunities for earning income in rural areas is crucial for rural development” (URT, 2001). This strategy also identifies tourism as one of the key areas of diversification that rural communities must be able to access in order to improve their welfare and join in the national tourism boom. It

advocates the promotion of “*Pro-poor tourism based on natural and cultural assets of the poor*” in order to “*unlock opportunities for economic gains and other livelihood benefits*” (URT, 2001). The Wildlife Policy of Tanzania focuses many of its provisions on goals relating to increasing benefits and securing user rights at the local level in order to integrate wildlife with rural land uses and improve livelihoods (MNRT, 1998b).

EXAMPLES FROM NORTHERN TANZANIAN RANGELANDS

While policies and strategies for natural resource management seek to democratize resource tenure and access in the interest of poverty reduction, the situation on the ground does not reflect this rhetoric. In northern Tanzanian rangelands the broad reality is more one of spiraling poverty rather than strengthening and diversification of livelihoods. Pastoralism, which is the dominant land use in this part of the country, has been in decline for many years due to declining per capita livestock numbers (e.g. Mwalyosi, 1992) and a lack of viable livelihood alternatives. The roots of these problems, inevitably, center on land and natural resource management.

One of the by-products of the liberalization policies adopted in the mid-1980's (those same policies that led to the investment-driven mining and tourism booms) has been increasing pressure on rural land tenure. In northern Tanzania, lands used by pastoralists for livestock grazing have come under increasing pressure by outside sources during this period (Igoe and Brockington, 1999). Pastoralists have been forced into smaller and smaller tracts of land as outside investors, National Parks, and immigrant cultivators from overpopulated highlands elsewhere in northern Tanzania encroach upon and take over what were formerly traditional grazing areas. Land legislation remains complex, occasionally contradictory, and weakly enforced by administrators and the judiciary, despite policy objectives to the contrary.

The process of land loss curtails the resilience and flexibility needed by livestock managers in semi-arid rangelands, undermines the viability of pastoralist land uses which are generally the most sustainable and appropriate in these dry areas, and forces people to look for and choose other livelihood options. Where residents of these rangelands choose cultivation, it may simply accelerate the poverty spiral by taking over grazing areas, damaging soil fertility, increasing erosion, and leaving people dependent on an activity that is marginal at best in semi-arid areas.

Diversifying rural economies in these rangelands is essential if this poverty spiral is to be countered and meaningful livelihood gains and overall economic growth achieved. As the draft Rural Development Strategy and numerous other government documents state, tourism can provide one of the main opportunities for achieving this given the sector's rapid growth in northern Tanzania over the past decade. Community-based tourism, where local people engage directly in tourism enterprises, stands to unlock new communal and individual opportunities from this

powerful growth sector (TDP, 2002). In many areas tourism has had a major positive impact in a very short period of time in channeling new economic opportunities to local communities living in marginal rural areas. In remote Loliondo Division in Ngorongoro District, for example, seven villages now earn a total of over US\$110,000 annually from a variety of joint ventures with tour operators. In Ololosokwan Village, one of the seven Loliondo communities referred to above, tourism revenue has grown each year since the initiation of these activities in 1998 (see Figure 1) and now totals about US\$55,000 per annum.

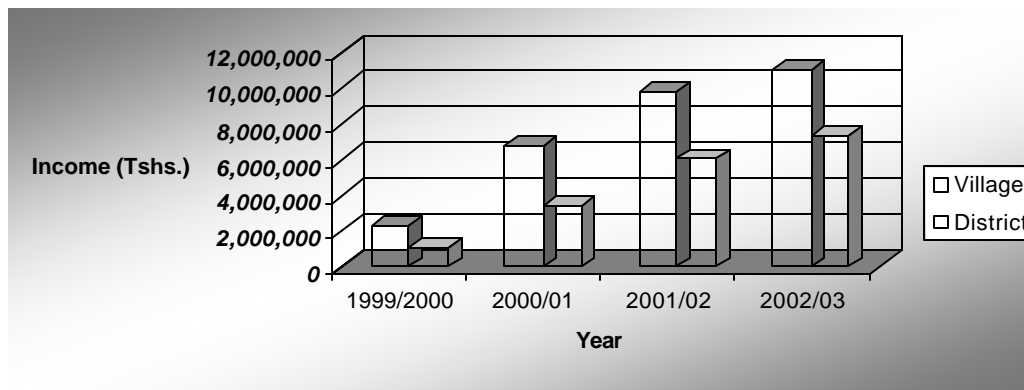


Figure 1: Income to Ololosokwan village and Ngorongoro District Council from payments by one of four tour operators using the designated village campsite. This revenue represents only about 20% of Ololosokwan’s gross annual revenue from community-based tourism ventures on its land.

But this type of diversification is the product of hard-won socioeconomic gains on the part of these rural communities, rather than an outcome of empowering environmental governance reforms. Community-based tourism receives little actual support in terms of enabling villages to engage in such activities. By contrast, Ololosokwan’s hallmark ventures have succeeded in spite of numerous efforts by district and national authorities to foreclose them (Masara, 2000). Major conflicts currently exist, for example, between centrally managed tourist hunting concessions throughout northern Tanzanian village rangelands, and these community-based tourism ventures. This is exacerbated by the lack of transparency in the management of wildlife resources. These problems have been raised numerous times in the recent past, for example with respect to tourist hunting concessions, but they remain largely unaddressed in practice (Majamba, 2001; Barrow et al., 2000; Nshala, 1999). Existing statutes and actual practices do not support local empowerment and greater rural economic opportunities, but rather exclusive

centrally controlled uses of wildlife and tourism activities at the expense of local opportunities. Thus while the pastoralist livestock economy continues to descend into a poverty spiral, new opportunities such as tourism are proscribed to local people due to conflicts with central interests. Under such conditions the goal of rural diversification is inevitably undermined, and the outcome is a continued deterioration of the rural economy.

Discussion: Rhetoric and Reality in Environmental Governance

The failure to diversify and strengthen rural economies in northern Tanzanian rangelands is a result of the gap between the rhetoric and reality of natural resource management reforms. More than anything, it is the endurance of centralized modes of managing lands and natural resources, with control still remaining in the hands of the State at the expense of local communities, that hinders the development of new opportunities and continues to marginalize local people. It should be noted that another product of this situation is the continued degradation of natural resources through over-reliance on the State for custodianship and resultant open access exploitation. Wildlife is a prime example of the problem caused by the failures of environmental reforms efforts. Large mammal populations in key dispersal areas and corridors in northern Tanzanian rangelands have become widely depleted (perhaps by as much as 80%) through bushmeat poaching as a consequence of open access use, as well as habitat loss resulting partially from wildlife's inability to compete locally as a form of land use (see WSRTF, 1995; MNRT, 1998b; Barnett, 2000). Thus the lack of local economic empowerment with respect to natural resource management not only undermines poverty reduction in rural areas, but leads to loss of Tanzania's irreplaceable natural resource base as well. The economic and ecological problems resulting from such situations are all, at root, matters of governance.

CONCLUSION

One recent review of natural resource management and rural development in sub-Saharan Africa notes that, “*Access and control over resources is the major governance issue, especially for rural people, and it is the bread and butter issue on which democracy must deliver*” (USAID, 2002). Is Tanzanian democracy delivering on these key issues in order to contribute to a more prosperous economic and environmental future? Confronting rural poverty and natural resource management challenges are not so much a problems of policy as they are of implementation. Most importantly, they require bringing about structural changes in economic relationships and resource management rights. Numerous national policies, such as those for Land, Forestry, and Wildlife, identify and detail the link between rural resource rights and socioeconomic improvement. The draft Rural Development Strategy awaiting implementation does so eloquently and precisely. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the National Poverty Eradication Strategy, by contrast, do not as yet highlight the link between rural development and natural resources as a key to poverty reduction, and thus are not strong tools for bringing about key reforms.

Environmental governance at the policy level in Tanzania has, for the past decade at least, aimed at reforming management institutions in order to democratize natural resource control and use and to improve transparency on the part of central authorities. In general, however, these goals have not been met and centralized resource management institutions and practices persist. In some cases, local initiatives that effectively open up more democratic natural resource management opportunities do develop, such as in the case of community-based ecotourism ventures in northern Tanzania. However, such practical opportunities often encounter stiff resistance from vested central interests. Thus diversification of the rural economy through environmental reforms is lauded, but in practice local rights and opportunities are curtailed more than supported. Changing the rhetoric of natural resource reform to a reality of genuine democratic governance is essential to the nation’s economic and environmental future.

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Emmanuel Kallonga has worked on rural development and poverty alleviation issues in Tanzania for over twenty years. He began his career in the Prime Minister's Office before moving out of the public sector to become a leader in Tanzanian civil society on development issues. He was formerly the Country Director for Oxfam-Tanzania, where he worked extensively on issues such as food security, land tenure, and economic policy formulation. In 2000 he founded Hakikazi Catalyst, for which he is the Director. Hakikazi Catalyst's objectives are to work towards the socioeconomic empowerment of marginalized people, strengthen other Tanzanian civil society organizations, and encourage popular participation and influence on policy making processes.

Dr. Alan Rodgers has worked on natural resource management and conservation in East Africa for much of the past four decades. After graduating from the University of Nairobi, he began his career with the Tanzanian Department of Wildlife. Following this he set up the wildlife sub-department in the University of Dar es Salaam and then helped create the Wildlife Institute of India. His career has included work on wildlife conservation, forestry, protected area management, marine areas conservation, resource monitoring, ecology, and rural development, and he has been the author or co-author of over a hundred professional publications on these subjects. His 1991 text written with Katherine Homewood; *Maasailand Ecology: Pastoralist Development and Wildlife Conservation in Ngorongoro, Tanzania*; is a classic study of conservation and rural development in East Africa. He currently serves as the Regional Coordinator for the United Nations Development Programme-Global Environmental Facility (UNDP-GEF) Biodiversity Projects in Eastern Africa.

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